

8. (Amended) The method of claim 6, wherein the thermal treatment comprises a first thermal treatment and purifying the graphite comprises subjecting the graphite material to a second thermal treatment under vacuum at a temperature in the range of 1750 to 3000°C.

13. (Amended) A method comprising:
expanding a graphite material;
following expansion, compacting the graphite material; and
following compaction, purifying the graphite material at a temperature of at least 1750°C.

18. (Amended) The method of claim 17, wherein purifying the graphite material comprises a second thermal treatment and the second thermal treatment comprises purifying under vacuum at a temperature in the range of 1750 to 3000°C.

24. (Amended) An article of manufacture comprising graphite formed according to a method comprising:
expanding a graphite material from a first density to a smaller second density;
and
following expansion, purifying the graphite material at a temperature of at least 1750°C.